

Hitchcock (Ed.)

REPORT

OF THE

Professor of Physical Education and Hygiene,

TO THE

TRUSTEES OF AMHERST COLLEGE,

FOR THE YEAR 1862-3.

[Edward Hitchcock] 

TO THE CORPORATION OF AMHERST COLLEGE:

GENTLEMEN: In this second report of the Physical Culture Department to you, for the year 1862-3, I am happy to state that a much more favorable account of the health of the students of college will be offered than was given for the year 1861-2. You will probably remember that those students are placed on the sick list, who have been absent from the literary exercises of college more than two consecutive days while here, on account of physical disability. On this list there have been during the past year thirty names, of which two were from the Senior class, four from the Junior class, twelve from the Sophomore, and twelve from the Freshman classes. (See table No. 2.) In addition to these thirty, two students have left college on the plea of ill health, although in both cases the sickness was decidedly more prospective than actually existing.

The causes of physical disability for the past year are fifteen in number, of which an epidemic—diphtheria—placed nine out of the thirty on the sick list. Seven of the other cases were owing to the very common complaints of colds and lung fever. The remaining causes are indicated in the table subjoined to this report. (Table No. 1.)

The time of the year in which most of our sickness has occurred is worthy of mention. Previous to the first of March but ten cases were recorded on the sick list; but between the first of March and the first of June the remaining twenty were recorded. Subsequent to March also have occurred all the cases of diphtheria, as a result of the epidemic which has prevailed through Amherst and vicinity during the present spring and summer.

During the past year the average amount of sickness to each student in college has been 1.741 days, or nearly two days to each one. During the previous year the same average was two days and a half to each student, showing an improvement in the past over the previous year. A similar gain is found on comparing the percentage of sickness the two past years. During 1861-2 about one to every five was on the sick list, while during 1862-3 the proportion was nearly as one to six, and this notwithstanding the fact that of the forty-two students who have joined the U. S. Army during the past year, many of them were the best physically developed men in college.

The length of time during which those on the sick list have been kept from college exercises by disability during the year has varied from three days to six weeks, as is indicated by the table.

The only injury met with in the Gymnasium during the past year, was by a member of the Freshman class, who by his own admission was experimenting in a careless manner with one of the articles of apparatus, and that not during the regular class exercises. His confinement was only three days.

In regard to the success of physical exercise in the Gymnasium as at present carried on, I can only reiterate what was stated in my report to you one year ago, and this is that the plan originally proposed works admirably. The novelty passes off by the end of the first six months, and then the students regard the physical exercise in the same light as they do any of the other college duties. And I feel confident of the truth of the statement when I say that a required exercise in the Gymnasium is no more irksome to the students, than is a required duty in any of the literary or scientific departments of college.

The military drill with muskets has been engaged in about once each week during the past year. I have made this a much more thorough exercise during the past than I did during the previous year, and the good results are manifest in the more erect position of the students. Besides this a relish for accurate drill is strongly manifested, especially in the two lower classes. And I respectfully request permission to employ for a short time next term a thoroughly educated military man, as drill master, to give us an impulse in this direction.

During the first half of the year past, I have in a weekly exercise met the Sophomore class for attending to the physical culture of the voice. In these exercises I have endeavored to describe the structure and design of the vocal organs, how they should be used in order to give them their greatest efficiency, and how to guard against injurious action. The greater part of the exercises was occupied with vocal practice by each of the members of the class, in order to enable them to cultivate a pure tone, a strong voice, and distinctness of utterance. Singing was constantly made use of in order to acquire pureness of tone.

It is with great pleasure that I can report to you several material and important changes in and about the Gymnasium. Dr. Barrett, of Northampton, whose name you have already affixed to the edifice, has built a fine and commodious gallery across the West end of the building, which is capable of accommodating at least 150 spectators. This addition is not simply a convenience, but a necessary part of the building, since the number of spectators is often so great that both the spectators and students are greatly embarrassed, if all are com-

peled to stand on the floor of the Gymnasium. The ornamenting of the grounds directly in front of the building, under the direct supervision of Dr. Barrett himself, not only bears testimony to his high appreciation of good taste, but is very valuable in its immediate effect upon the Gymnasium edifice, and in its bearing upon the proper culture of the young men.

The vital statistics of college are taken twice each year, and their service is apparent to all connected with the Gymnasium. For particulars I refer you to the series of tables appended to the report. (Table No. 3.) It is an interesting fact that many of these items exceed the same averages as given by the best European statisticians, for some of the nations of the old world. It is also valuable for us to know that no average as yet has ever fallen short of the item of the previous average, and only once has it been the same.

I am satisfied that our ten pound dumb bells are too heavy for the class exercises, or rather there is a portion of each class who are obliged to exert themselves too much in order to keep time with their stronger and larger classmates. The general plan of the so called light Gymnastics, seems to be the more correct one for the best physical development of our students. I therefore request that I may be permitted to exchange our ten pound dumb bells for the lighter wooden ones made by Dr. Dio Lewis. And in order to make our complement of apparatus what it should be for the most complete Gymnastic drill, we very much need an instrument of music. It is my request therefore that you would appropriate a sum sufficient for the purchase of a loud-toned piano, of plain and substantial finish.

The committee appointed by your Board at its last annual meeting, consisting of President Stearns, Dr. Nathan Allen, of Lowell, and Dr. Benjamin Barrett, of Northampton, have rendered us efficient service during the year. And it is my earnest wish that it may seem best to your Body to give the special charge of this department into the hands of the same committee during the ensuing year.

All of which is most respectfully submitted by your humble servant,

EDWARD HITCHCOCK, JR.

BARRETT GYMNASIUM, July 7, 1863.

TABLE NO. 1.
Sick List, for 1862-3.

Name of the Disease,	Average and Actual Duration of Disease,	Number Disabled.
Diphtheria,	10 days, (average)	9
Inflammation of Lungs, and Colds,	13 " "	7
" Bowels,	9½ " "	2
Face Ache,	4 " (actual)	1
Injured in Gymnasium,	3 " "	1
" out of "	7 " "	1
Palmar Abscess,	5 weeks, "	1
Axillary "	14 days, "	1
Sciatica,	5 " "	1
Pleurisy,	8 " "	1
Bilious Fever,	13 " "	1
Jaundice,	6 weeks, "	1
Diarrhea,	6 days, "	1
Colic,	5 " "	1
General Inability,	3 " "	1

15 Causes.

30 Cases.

TIME OF SICKNESS.—September, 2; October, 1; November, 3; January, 4; February, 2; March, 8; April, 1; May, 9. Total, 30.

TABLE NO. 2.
Disabilities Arranged by Classes for the Two Years Past.

	Seniors.	Juniors.	Sophomores.	Freshmen.	In the proportion of
1861-2	7	4	11	22	1 to 5.340
1862-3	2	4	12	12	1 to 5.933

TABLE NO. 3.
Vital Statistics of Amherst College, 1862-3.

	Age, in years.	Weight, in pounds.	Height, in feet.	Chest Girth in inches.	Arm Girth in inches.	Forearm Girth in inches.	Lung Capacity, cubic inches.	Power of Lungs.	Weight Lifted.
Seniors, -	22.650	142.781	5.680	36.203	11.734	11.109	277.483	294.129	14.379
Juniors, -	22.500	147.530	5.984	36.320	11.630	11.050	322.780	279.540	12.700
Sophomores, -	21.117	137.577	5.713	35.279	11.375	10.663	257.174	308.100	11.170
Freshmen, -	20.004	141.964	5.599	35.008	11.456	10.887	245.792	302.603	11.866
College average, { -	21.580	142.713	5.744	35.712	11.548	10.927	275.807	296.093	12.528

